

## Endgame -

The sky was gray, on the verge of raining. That did not stop me or my dad. We continue our white-water adventure... well, at least that was what I was trying for. The water was not agreeing.

When the clouds turned a liquidy black, I barely even noticed. The light was, somehow, still coming through. The water was roaring, and our pair of kayaks continued their float down the river.

‘Finally,’ I thought to myself. ‘I am getting to some white-water.’

I analyzed it, and saw to “shoot the v.” I positioned myself, my dad nodded to me, and I started paddling harder. Then a sound filled the air. It seemed to be a mix between feedback and thunder. My head jolted up, I grabbed my ears, and looked skyward.

I stared up at the oil-like clouds in wonder. The noise broke off... the clouds looked alive. Once again, the air filled with the feedback/thunderclap. This time I could see something as it leapt from the clouds. It looked like a formless chunk of obsidian, or crude oil.

The thing arched down from the cloud, ripped through some earth, and then leapt back up... The ground where it had torn through gained a deep gash in it. I watched in amazement as the fissure deepened, and deepened... and then stopped. The ground around it reddened, and then darkened to black. The planet itself seemed injured by the attack.

My dad was yelling at me, but my mind was not there. I could not hear a word he said.

Another feedback/thunderclap.

Another lunging thing, this one smaller.

This one for me.

I stared blankly at it, terrified. There was only blackness...

I could not think.

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Slowly, my senses fade back to me and my father is leaning over me, checking my pulse.

I realize two things at this moment; I am on dry land, and drenched.

“What happened?” I ask.

“Something from the sky attacked you, I thought you were gone... and...” my father trails off, staring into my eyes.

“What? What is it?” and I realize my glasses are not on, and I can see fine.

My father would not respond.

“What dad? Tell me please!”

“Well... your eyes...” he starts, but he will not continue.

I stand, and walk to the water.

I look down at the water to see my reflection.

I stare at the water, in uncomprehending horror, ‘how can this be?’

I look at the reflection of black clouds in the sky, right where my head’s reflection should be.

I follow the water where my image should be, and lead my eyes to the shore.

There is another surprise.

I have no shadow.

I try to collect my thoughts.

I walk back to my dad.

“Now, tell me, what is it about my eyes?”

“They are black, completely black. They look the same as the sky.” he tells me, in a shaky voice.

“Let’s get out of here, now.”

“All right,” and then we turn towards the road.

We are not far from where we had the van shuttled to.

We can worry about the kayaks later.

“Well, I wonder if this storm is everywhere...”

“We’ll find out soo”

My dad is cut off mid-sentence by a feedback/thunderclap. I spin on my heels to see my dad.

I turn just in time to see one of the things tear through my dad. It leaves a growing hole

where it passed through him. My dad’s skin turns pale... a shudder ripples through me. My lower lip trembles, a tear comes to my eye.

“DAD!” I fall to my knees at his side. I quickly come to the realization that I have no time to mourn.

I must get away.

I reach into my father’s jacket and get his keys.

I stand and look my father over.

My eyes close, and I almost go limp with grief.

A feedback/thunderclap explodes off in the distance, shaking me back to life.

I run for the van.

Minutes pass, I am now going the van’s top speed home.

I look at the rear-view mirror.

The things are tearing the road behind me apart.

So many of the amorphous black blobs fill the air behind me, that they almost appear to be a solid mass.

“Faster...” I whisper, and I press on the floored gas pedal harder.

I stare at the things behind me, and they seem to form a face.

Its mouth opens wide, it speeds up.

“No...” I whisper... then I feel dizzy, I must go faster to survive this.

“FASTER!!!” I scream, shifting all my weight onto the gas pedal. If I were to think about it clearly, I would realize this would do nothing. But, strangely, the speedometer’s needle starts going up. The needle goes as far as it can move, but I feel the van continue to accelerate.

I look at the mirror again, and I see the face starting to lose the race.

Finally, distance between me and it.

I continue, without stopping, all the way back to Overland Park.

Liquid black cloud still overhead.

It seems to stretch on forever.

All I really care about is the fact that I have escaped the barrage.

I sit in the driver’s seat, in front of my apartment. Trying to focus, I begin to wonder how I managed to go so fast, then I look to the gas gauge.

‘F’ it read.

How can that be?

I turn the van off, and get out.

I go into my apartment, and turn the television on.

Seemingly every channel is providing coverage on the cloud.

Many stations have “experts” discussing it.

How, exactly, “experts” on this subject exist, confuses me greatly.

I flip through, and find one that some storm-chaser is following the destruction, and they are currently showing the ravaging of Denver, Colorado. It rips lower levels out of buildings, and buildings fall onto other buildings.

“The mysterious storm has destroyed multiple cities in this fashion, and then leaves many survivors, and destroys all routes of escape.” says the anchor.

Now it shows live footage of Denver after the attack, a huge dry moat around the city, and airplanes are being ripped from the sky.

I flip through the channels, searching for a shred of hope, but instead find quite the opposite.

“A US Military representative has informed our network that only high levels of electromagnetic radiation will damage the storm. Apparently the only manner in which this can be accomplished is a massive nuclear strike. The representative has stated that this nuclear strike would wipe out all surface life on Earth.” stated an anchor.

I turn the TV off.

I sit on the floor in disbelief of everything.

I zone out, losing all attention to the outside world.

I am shaken back to reality by the ringing phone.

I get up, and walk over to the phone, and lift it to my ear.

“Hello?”

“Steven, this is Clark, you’re back. I thought that you might be... say, there’s an end of the world party at school... I was about to head over, wanna go?”

“I don’t know.” I say, a little confused.

“Come on, man, beer, drugs, and girls... no one is gonna care what we are doing... everyone is going to be there... last chance to party.”

“I guess.”

I mean, hell, what else is there to do...

Twenty minutes later, I am listening to over a dozen looted stereos, blasting throughout school. Some people are dancing. Some drinking. Others crying.

Some people are letting all their lives’ rage out on any soul unfortunate enough to be within an arm’s reach.

I look right, and see some guy walk up to Keith, and jack him in the throat, smiling all the while. Then he rams Keith nose-first into his rising knee. Keith’s nose splits open and blood gushes out onto the knee of the guy’s jeans.

I look left, and see people taking hits from a huge bong that has all sorts of crap around it. Cans of paint thinner, air plane glue, other things... even a few people, dead or passed out.

I walk, look around, and see a guy laying a line on a girl... something along the lines of ‘what do you have to lose, it’s the end of the world after all...’

The girl says no. This answer upsets the guy, who sweeps her feet out from under her, and pins her to the floor. He begins pawing all over her... horrible. I look around and see that same interaction all over the commons.

Everyone here has given up.

Each person trying to live out some fantasy with a complete disregard to feelings, and rights, of others.

I charge at the nearest would-be rapist, I scream at him. I prepare to pull him away from her. As I reach my hands out at him he begins to float above her. I feel energy between my gaze and his body. I spin him around with this energy, I hear snapping noises as he spins, and then blood comes out of his mouth... I push him out from over the girl, and drop his limp body. I am shocked at what I had done. Now the girl stares at my eyes. I look away, and run outside.

I look up at the cloud, confused, and absolutely repulsed by all that I had just seen. The things people become when the end is near.

I stare up at the sky and scream “STOP!”

The liquid black clouds stop moving entirely.  
I stare up at the sky, and a few beams of sunlight pour through.  
The oil clouds no longer cover the sky entirely.  
The chaos is done for now.

I look to the clouds.  
The tranquility will not last.

over to: [Requiem – Finale](#)  
back to: [Main – Short Stories](#)